

**VSDBM-H Day Regional Program
Advisory Task Force Meeting Summary
May 14, 2007**

Task Force members in attendance: David Young, Stacy Machowski, Claudine Wiggins, Bob Mitchell, Bob Pietrasanta, Pat Russo, Ralph Shellman

- Introduction of guests
- Review of summary from last meeting
No comments.
- Review and adjustment of the agenda
Today's meeting will focus on Recommendation 3. Then we will do next steps. Karen can review planning; we will select a representative for this group and develop the report. No comments from task force members.

What are we hearing from our constituencies? -- Taskforce Members

- Parents
- Staff
- Special Education Directors
 - School divisions should be contacting parents of the students currently enrolled as soon as possible to invite them to see programs in their home school division.
 - Director of SECEP interested to see what the Task Force will decide today.
- Superintendents
- VDOE

Recommendations Work – Review of Draft Recommendations

- Students Currently Enrolled

Pat Trice (unable to attend; provided feedback through John) wants to ensure that parents receive support for working with sons or daughters at home; encourage more community support, connection with community agencies. Pat will provide language about this in the text in addition to attachment, and not just for home support, but also support for transitions.

Question -- the facilities need to be state-of-the-art; is this something that will be the responsibility of LEA, or will it be done in some other fashion (State supported)?

Two points – it is important for day and additional programs that this facility will be the right facility. The recommendations so far are silent on who pay; this will be one of the challenge for planners -- how to close the funding gap. The burden for support must not fall on LEA. Can we include this in recommendation? If the Task Force agrees, it is appropriate to say that this will be done without burden to the LEA.

John noted that implicit in legislation is the need to ask what school divisions need to make this a success and this language will be included in the preamble to the recommendations.

- Regional Day Program

Members noted some concern with the numbering and specificity of recommendations; we should make all recommendations in one list -- no sub-categories (e.g., 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3) and make recommendations more specific and less ambiguous -- bulleted, itemized and numbered. The following additional points were made by members:

Include a recommendation current staff should be retained to fill positions necessary to operate the new program and given opportunities to transfer to other programs. Retain all qualified staff. Staffing ratios should be followed.

The notion of a critical mass of students is important and should be tied to State standards.

Timing of IEP's for these children is critical; student needs and therefore programmatic needs should be established in time for planning.

This process needs to be seamless for students, not stop and start that the various phases imply. This should be included in the recommendation text and in the preamble.

School districts can begin working with students now. They are invited to IEP meetings so this process is in place.

The recommendations need to include something about established programs, that any program serving these students must have a proven track record.

Create a separate recommendation stating that the Task Force members need to stay involved.

John will add a recommendation the new process or initiative needs to work closely with school divisions. Other member concerns/questions:

When Day school goes from SOP to LEA entity – is it relieved from federal mandates? What is the state getting off its back? VA can't afford new school, one point of view, being passed off to LEA? State will fund a lot initially, but what about later.

It was noted that the continued presence of school in Hampton Roads is the result of a political agreement. Current funding stream for Regional Programs is a state funding stream. Current stream may not be strong enough to support this regional program. Because the program is so expensive, state and local entity partnership description needs to be stronger. There is no current funding for this regional school. The general assembly intends to make a commitment for a regional day program for students with sensory impairments but not for other students.

Question about what the state is letting go of -- the residential aspect of the school. There will continue to be an admissions process, a regional process for placement, and all the other processes for regional programs.

Some in the group want to ensure a strong commitment from state to fund this -- LEA's cannot take this on. There have been discussions with a state senator about this and this is understood. The group needs to inform the general assembly how much is needed.

Question -- What are the federal mandates for states for this type of school? There is no mandate for a state or regional school for the sensory impaired, but state support for this type of school is tremendous. There should be a recommendation about the state's continuing role in regional day program, programmatic, financial and policy.

Members observed that IEP and evaluations and procedures must continue to be followed.

Lunch break

- Additional Programs to be Located at the School

List of potential programs to provide planners ideas for types of programs:

Program to provide vocational assistance or intervention at an earlier age to ensure vocational needs met for transition. The campus is too big to maintain for a Regional Day program only. New Horizons programs, even though not for sensory impaired, could be located here. Vocational programs for children with other disabilities could be grouped with these

children to share the financial burden. Make the new program technology rich.

An alternative program for high functioning students who don't adapt well to large, busy high schools which would have highly qualified teachers in the core areas could be created. These teachers could work with special education teachers in a collaborative setting. Don't limit to students with sensory disabilities. Ensure and facilitate transition.

Alternative program for students temporarily suspended to help them enhance performance. SECEP operates some of these programs. This could be another regional entity that currently exists but could be moved to this campus.

Woodrow Wilson type of program -- set up a training center here to alleviate traveling great distances. Provide an independent living center. Some funding might come educational funding or from other areas.

Perkins funding is available for vocational education. Explore other federal funding. Provide work awareness and experience. Examine the way other entities fit with the day program.

ARC of the peninsula program or something similar should be contacted for possible inclusion or affiliation.

- Other Recommendations to consider:

Next Steps

- Discussion of Planning Phase and Task Force Role(s)

Immediate future: John will revise content and structure of recommendations send out for review by the end of the week. Contact John with additional comments.

Preamble will contain big recommendations.

Do members have other preamble items? Mention critical mass of students. Locate auxiliary programs here which would expand type of program offerings to this area, e.g., high tech center. Consider a public-private partnership. Transition to workforce: Make this part of 3rd recommendation.

Will there be another meeting? We will set up the meeting now and then disregard if it is not needed. John will poll the members after they have had a chance to read the revised recommendations.

The next meeting is tentatively Tuesday, May 22, 11 AM to 1 PM

Ralph Shelman was nominated to the VDOE planning group and prefers to have parent join him. Members recommended having Ralph and David Young serve on the planning group. All agreed with this recommendation.

Thanks for John's help. Thanks to interpreters and audience.